

Rend the Heavens with Fire not Rain (Video)

by Shane Idleman

This sermon emphasizes the transformative power of God's presence when He comes down, leading to changed lives and a deep desire for His presence. It highlights the importance of desperation, repentance, humility, and a heart cry for God to rend the heavens and fill us with His power. The sermon also addresses various hindrances that keep the heavens shut, such as pride, fear, control, power hunger, and a lack of desire to part from sin, stressing the need for surrender, humility, and a willingness to be consumed by God's presence.

Scripture: Isaiah 64:1, Isaiah 57:15, John 7:38, Acts 2:1, James 4:10, 1 Corinthians 8:1, Luke 9:23, Mark 9:24, Psalm 51:17, Philippians 2:3

Topics: "Transformative Power of God's Presence", "Surrender and Humility"

Description

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Transcript

Open the heavens and come down, visit your people. In other words, when God comes down, something is consumed. When God comes down, when the heavens are rent, and that word is bursting, it's breaking forth.

When he comes down, lives are changed. People are broken, just like Tito testified, his wife and even Rhea, people are broken. God's presence consumes all of these things.

And there are times when God seems distant, distant and hearts feel dry. But when God comes down, literally upon his people, we experience the joy of his presence. It's interesting, I was researching that song, Beulah Land, is that pronounced right, Beulah? Think so? Beulah, thank you, that was a close one.

Beulah Land, and it's actually from, I believe it's, I didn't write down any of the verses, Isaiah or so, later in the book of Isaiah, and it's talking about the celestial kingdom. It's talking about where we will spend eternity with God. And the author was named Edgar Stites.

And he said this, it was in 1876 that I wrote this song. I could only write only two verses and the chorus when I was overcome by the power of God and I fell on my face. The following Sunday, I wrote the third and fourth verses and again, I was so influenced by emotion that I could only pray and weep.

You see, that is our desire for you, that's our desire for this church. When God rends the heavens, actually what he's doing is he's ripping open your heart and he's coming in and he's filling you with his power and his presence there. And without a desire, that will not happen.

It starts with desire when you say, God, I want that. I'm lukewarm, I'm carnal, I need to experience the power and presence of God and to rend the heavens, it's to burst, it's to blow out, it's to explode. God, explode my soul.

Isaiah, what he's talking about here, it indicates desperation along with repentance and humility. That captures God's attention. I'm not saying anything I've never said before.

I'm just trying to, again, wet your appetite. There's a desperation. What it is, really, it's a heart cry, isn't it? If we get down and we look at what this is, it's a heart cry.

Lord, my heart cries out for you. I'm desperate, and that's the prayer that God answers. He doesn't answer the prayer of the prideful.

He answers the heart cry of the desperate. And last night, I didn't know if I wanted to share this with you, because the children's ministry workers might not like this, but they did a fantastic job. But I was in my office, real quick, printing something.

Pastor Abram just came up, and I heard throughout my office, through Susie's office, down the hallway, through children's ministry, I knew that cry. I knew that cry of my two-and-a-half-year-old, of all the voice of, wait, what is that? What is that? And I come out, and I go, Shane, it's pretty bad. She cut her head.

She might need stitches, and I'm holding her. But I heard the cry. Everything stopped.

Everything stopped, the printing, the worship service. I didn't know what was going on in here. I had to answer that cry of my children.

There was a desperation. There was a call. Daddy, Mommy, where are you? I need you.

I've been hurt. I've been wounded, and that's where the church needs to get. We need to get desperate for God and begin to cry out for Him.

He hears the cries. Is that the cry of my children? Is that the cry of desperation? Are you hurt? Are you harmed? Is the enemy coming against you? Well, your heart is positioned now for me to answer your prayers. Rend the heavens.

Oh, God, would you rend the heavens? Final verse, Isaiah 57. I love Isaiah. For thus says the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name, his very name is holy.

I dwell in a high and holy place with him who has a contrite and humble spirit. I will revive the spirit of the humble. I will revive the heart of the contrite one.

I don't know about you, but I take more faith in God's word than anything else that is out there. And when he says, I will revive you if you are humble and you are broken, you can take that to the bank. He will answer that prayer, that cry.

So here's what I really wanted to get to, and I'll be done. What keeps the heavens shut tight? We're praying, rend the heavens. But many people are asking, why is it happening in my life? Isn't it interesting? I'll get calls from people who can't stop weeping during worship and saying, I don't know what's going on in my heart.

And you get other people saying, this isn't my cup of tea, I'm out of here. Wait, wait, wait, same service. Same service, same song, same message.

What's the difference? Hard heart, pride, and arrogance. And so I'm just gonna share with you what keeps heaven shut, and it kept it shut in my life for many years. It's not a secret, I've always said this, that if I could go back and change anything, I would change when I was 12 years old and I repented and gave my heart and life to Jesus Christ, that I would have stayed on that narrow road.

But what keeps heaven shut? A lot of us are too concerned about image and reputation. Because when God digs deep, you look different. And we're concerned about our image and our reputation.

Shane, I was raised in a denomination that doesn't believe what even Regis talked about. Well, that's too bad. It's in the Bible.

Shane, I don't want to get too carried away. And I saw it a lot, I've talked to men, and they'd be like, man, Shane Pastor, that message really changed my heart. And I said, well, share it on Facebook.

Share it on social media. Oh, no, I can't do that. I've got an image to uphold.

That will always prevent God working deeply in your heart. If you're more worried about your image than His image, you will not, the heavens will not be rent. And your reputation, your reputation, I'll share it sometime, I've shared it over the years, where it was the most profound time of my life, where I believe God just literally, not audibly, but poured into my heart, like even Re mentioned.

And I wrote it, I couldn't stop writing. It was on a messy notepad, and I put it down. It's actually in my books.

A lot of the books and articles I write, when God said, you really don't want revival, it will ruin your schedule. It will do something to your reputation. And what He meant is He knew, I like those, I gravitate towards the well-balanced, right? The John MacArthur's, the conservative, the intellectual, the Bible theologian, and that's that reputation.

But you can't have any of that, if you want God to rent in the heavens. Because you're more worried about those things. My, I can't get, they can't see me on the altar.

They can't see me raising my hands. They can't see me crying and weeping over the things of God. And it is interesting how those conservative churches, often, often, they'll mock fasting.

They'll mock all-night prayer meetings. They'll never have one. You'll never find them at the altar, ever.

You'll never see emotional worship going. It's all the deep things of God are ignored, because it challenges the heart. Their hearts have never been ramped and ripped open, rend and ripped open.

I can name churches. I've lived here all of my life. I know why they're not experiencing what we are experiencing here, just over that mountain.

Reputation, image. We're calm, cool, and collect. Well, God, when he moves, it's messy.

He's working. When a holy God hits sinful man, how can you contain that? Now, as pastors, we're actually called to steward this. And it's the most difficult thing I've done, ever.

Because you're trying to navigate the Titanic through icebergs. And where God's moving, so is the enemy. For every encouraging story, you get the internet going out.

For every marriage that's doing great, you get another one slandering the church. For every, it's just, the enemy's just stirring the strife, stirring the fiery darts. And what else keeps heaven from being, from the heavens shut tight? Knowledge puffs up.

Knowledge puffs up. And I've seen it over the years. Those, the saddest thing that I think, and Pastor Edmund will agree with me, we've talked about, we sometimes joke about this, but not really joking.

You know, we're sad inside. But those who have the most Bible knowledge are often the most, they're often not open to what we're doing here. Yeah, it's like, no, no, no, it's just the doctrine.

It's just the Father, the Son, and the Holy Word. We don't talk about the Holy Spirit. We don't do that kind of, we don't let God wreck us.

We don't let God open the altar. We don't cry and weep over our sins. We don't pray and fast and all night.

What is this? I have Bible knowledge, and knowledge puffs up. D.O. Moody, when he was talking about Bible teachers in his day, he said, they're good teachers, but why can't they see that the one thing that they're missing is the power of the Holy Spirit? That's when God's Word becomes electrified, and it changes hearts. And the more knowledge I get, what comes with knowledge? It puffs up.

And if I'm puffed up here, you're not gonna see me down there. Bible knowledge and pride, you don't know it, but there are people at this church, very knowledgeable, probably as knowledgeable, if not more so than me, but the one thing they lack is the power of the Holy Spirit in their life. Oh, they can preach a sermon.

They can put a sermon together. They have knowledge, but there's no unction of the Spirit. There's no life-changing power and passion in their heart.

And then what keeps the heavens shut tight? The other thing is fear, fear, because this is a little bit out of our comfort zone, isn't it? I mean, when you hear that saying, put God in a box, have you heard that? Let's put God in a box. This wall of the box is emotional worship. Keep him in the box.

This wall of the box is the altar and three-hour services, and that's too emotional. And then, so we got God in this box of how we should conduct ourselves, how we should act. And fear prevents the heavens from being ran, and God coming down.

Fear of, I don't wanna turn into those people on TV. I don't either. And I always give you, I used to go to some weird Pentecostal church.

You care, oh, I don't want that to happen to me. I don't either. I'm with you, but I want the power of presence of God, or I don't wanna have anything to do with church.

I didn't just come for an hour and a half to have a social club and go eat lunch. Did you? I mean, when God is moving, we're being changed and challenged and fear. And I've actually had people come up to me and say, I don't like you talking about this stuff.

I just want Bible. His word is in my heart like a burning fire. Jesus said, if you believe on the outs of scripture, say out of your belly will flow rivers of living water.

John the Baptist said he's coming to baptize you with fire. The fire of God, the unction of God, go out and do things in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, do these things, and in my name, you will do this list of things in the power of God.

That's Bible. It's actually not Bible what you're doing, to not walk in the power of God and see lives change and have a desire for prayer and worship and get to church and pray for people. They might be healed.

They might be set free. That's not Bible. That's Phariseeism.

If you're not doing the things of God. So is fear preventing you because you don't wanna look weird like somebody on TV or somebody you know at a weird church? I'm with you. I don't either.

But there are times when God just wrecks us, and that can be a good thing. Did you know that God has given you emotions for that reason? We don't let the emotions control us and make decisions off the emotions and get emotional. That's where the word comes from.

Oh, they're just getting emotional. But they should follow like the engine is driving the train. God's word is the engine and the emotions are the caboose.

They follow. They don't lead. Don't we want to experience God? That's what biblical Christianity is.

People filled with God's spirit experiencing Him. What keeps the heavens shut tight? Another thing is control. Control.

Are you known as a controlling person? Have you ever struggled with that? What, controlling others? You know, men, usually men fall in this, or type A personalities, women too. I mean, we're controlling. We want to control things.

We don't want to allow God to do certain things. I want to control what God wants to do. And it happens, this is a hard job of pastoring too, because we are, to some degree, we're called to control, or I should say steward the environment here.

So we do have to control certain things. We have to say no, we have to discern, we have to, but at the same time, be open to what God is doing. But a controlling person who wants to control what God does, and wants to be in charge of certain situations, and God says, I can't fill that person mightily with my spirit.

And then along with that, what can keep heavens shut is those of us when we have been power hungry. You ever see that in the church, or in your lives? Power hungry. I want titles, I want to be on this team, I want to start this ministry, I want to be filled with the spirit so I can pray for people, and they'll be healed, and I can be elevated, and it's about me, and this power, man, if I could just have that power, if I could just have that power, and if I could just, God won't rend the heavens in that heart.

Remember, I think it was Simon the Sorcerer. I just thought if I didn't write down, and so if I'm wrong, just let me know. But he became a believer, and he saw the power of the Holy Spirit, and he said, what will it cost to buy that power? And they said, you have no part, no portion in this matter because your heart is not right before God.

And a lot of people want that. If I just could get the gifts, and they come up, Shane, I want to just be filled with God's spirit so then I can be another Billy Graham, then I can be another elevated person in the ministry, then I can have this, and God sees our heart. You have to come as a sinner, a lost sinner who needs a justifying Savior, and just say, Lord, whatever you want to do, if I'm gonna clean the toilets, if I'm gonna work in children's ministry, for all you not called to children's ministry, Lord, is that it? No matter where you want me, not my agenda, not my agenda, when we look at what God has done, when we look at what he has done in our lives, shouldn't we say, whatever you want me to do, I will have no name, no recognition, no title, just, God, just use me.

Just use me. Oh, how deep the Father's love, how vast. You know the old hymn? How vast, how wide, how deep the Father's love.

And we want to pay that back. So there can be no agenda but his agenda. No promotion except his promotion.

No limelight except his light. And no controlling except him controlling you. He will not fill a controlling or manipulating or prideful person.

He seeks deep humility. And then finally, obviously, he will not rend the heavens and our hearts if there is no desire to part from our sin. Now you might say, Shane, we do sin.

People say, I got it, but there's those who cling on to their sin. They don't want to give up something that God is wanting them to give up. And it's often not until that breakthrough comes until that giving up of that sin, of that repentance saying, God, I need you, that the rending of the heavens can follow that.

Remember what we talked about, I think on Monday, he acts for the one who waits for him. He acts for the one who waits for him. The one who desires him.

Remember, when God comes down, something is consumed. Something is consumed. I'll close with this thought, take this home, write it down, think about it.

Leonard Ravenhill said, there is no such thing as a painless Pentecost. Do you know what happened on Pentecost? The Holy Spirit came upon a group of people waiting for 10 days. And he's right, there is no such thing as a painless Pentecost.

It will cost you. It will cost you dying to self. It will cost you crucifying yourself to the world.

It will cost you saying no to sin and no to other engagements. Oh, but the power and presence of God. Because see, once you lay hold of that, you don't ever want to go back.

You don't want to go back to wealth and riches and notoriety. Oh, once you grasp hold of even the hem of his garment, you don't want to let go because the power and presence of God is so strong on your life, you don't care about your stock or your 401 or your whatever it is. God, just enter me and change me and consume me.

And we believe that God can heal. We believe that God can heal certain ailments, mentally, physically, emotionally. We believe that.

Now, does he always choose to do so? No, obviously not. If that were the case, I'd be God and he wouldn't because I'd be bossing him around. He's not a genie in a bottle.

He's not my butler. We don't know his sovereignty, but we can't exercise faith and we can trust and seek and hope and pray for that issue that won't go away. Pray for that stronghold.

Pray for that physical. What if God decides to heal and set free? I mean, call me crazy, but I believe the Scriptures. If you believe on me, if you, as you just said, you will do these things.

And I've noticed, I think the reason we're not seeing that to the degree we could is because we're not surrendered to the degree we could. The closer you get to Christ, the more you know his will, the more you can discern it, the more powerful and anointed your prayers will be. And so we're gonna open, not only the altar, but I think after the first song or two or so, would that be good? After the first song, if you'd like, you can take communion.

It's up here and in the balcony as well. Remember what Jesus did on the cross. Examine your heart first.

It's for believers. And if you don't know Jesus tonight, let me know, let Pastor Abram know. We would love to pray for you, but all you have to do is cry out.

God, I am a sinner. I confess that Jesus Christ died for me, that you rose him from the dead, that I'm no longer God, but you are God. And I'm stepping down off of my throne and I'm putting you on the throne and I'm repenting of my sin.

And God will hear that.

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